

## *International Education: Confucius Say ...*

Approximately two, 60-minute class periods will be required to complete this lesson allowing time for discussion and revisions.

### **I. Content:**

I want my students to understand:

- A. The affect one man’s life (Confucius) can have on an entire nation
- B. The applicability of his sayings found in “The Analects” worldwide
- C. Why the resurgence of his teachings in modern-day China
- D. How our cultures are similar through related sayings

### **II. Prerequisites:**

- A. An introduction to other famous philosophers, or religious leaders and their affect on the world is helpful
  - i. Discussion of Mohammed, Jesus Christ, or Siddhartha Guatama
- B. A basic understanding of social ills affecting China and the U.S. today
- C. General knowledge of Chinese history

### **III. Instructional Objectives:**

The student will:

- A. Learn about the life of Confucius (K’ung-fu-tzu)
- B. Compare and contrast Confucius sayings to similar American versions
- C. Write their own Confucius sayings
- D. Make inferences about why many Chinese (including the current communist party leaders) are looking for a new savior regarding social norms, behaviors and practices.

### **IV. Materials and Equipment:**

*Teacher:* Biography of Confucius - an abridged version that can be read in class. Many adequate choices can be found on the WWW.

**Teacher Handout #1:** A collection of Confucius sayings that can be handed out in class. A copy of “The Analects” (A prior reading may be helpful, but not necessary.) For example: Confucius. (2001) “The Analects”. Translated by E. Slingerland. In P. Ivanhoe, & B. Norden, *Readings in Classical Chinese Philosophy*. New York: Seven Bridges Press. (Original work published c. 551-479 BCE). ISBN 1889119091.

**Teacher Handout #2:** A collection of American adages, sayings and colloquialisms.  
Current updated Chinese data: maps, government practices, programs, and current events.

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*Student:*                      World Geography Text  
                                    Paper and Pencil  
                                    Copies of Confucius sayings

**V.    Instructional Procedures:**

- A.    Prior to this lesson, students should read about China. Teachers should lecture on Chinese history, government, and current events. An introduction to the “Five Themes of Geography” as they relate to China would be helpful. Teachers should read: *Comrade Confucius* by Benjamin Robertson (article archived at [South China Morning Post](#), October 8, 2005)
- B.    Pre-test about Confucius and Chinese relevance (25 questions)
- C.    Introduce students to various Confucius sayings you’ve written on the chalkboard. (Also have other sayings on the board that are not Confucius’ work but American). Define the words: quote, idiom, colloquialism if needed. Discuss the meanings of some of the Confucius sayings (10-15 minutes)
- D.    Tell the students they’re going to take their learning about China a step further by familiarizing themselves with one of China’s ancient philosophers, and that by doing this they should gain a better understanding of how Chinese people think, realizing that there are many similarities between our cultures when we look at American sayings alongside those of Confucius.
- E.    Read together as a class a biography of Confucius. (20 minutes)
- F.    Discuss his character, personality, and influence on ancient Chinese culture.
- G.    Recap the ideas presented in *Comrade Confucius*. Ask students why the teachings of Confucius seem pertinent in today’s China, and why China’s government is so quick to promote them. Have them record their own insight on paper. (10 minutes) Discuss. (10 minutes)
- H.    Now look at some of the American sayings. Discuss and compare and contrast them to those that are Confucian. Record similarities between Confucian and American sayings on the board. (Which American said it is of less importance.) Ask students why similarities exist. Discuss some of our own problems that exist in America (in the world). (10 minutes)
- I.    Have students write three sayings of their own and how they would apply them to problems found in America, China, or the rest of the world. (30 minutes) Discuss (10 minutes)
- J.    Recap Confucian teachings. Discuss why many teachings would not be accepted here in America and other countries promoting democratic ideals. Revisit, however, why many teachings might make a difference in Chinese life and the lives of the rest of humanity if taught, learned and followed. (15 minutes)

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**VI. Assessment / Evaluation:**

- A. Upon completion of this lesson students should be able to write about or discuss the relevance of Confucius in China and the world today.
- B. The teacher should have a feel for what the student has learned as observed in classroom discussions. Review main points based on observations.
- C. Students should hand in their written work to be graded.
- D. Formal evaluation (post test – same as pre-test)

**VII. Idaho Achievement Standards:**

- 6-9.GEH.1.8.1 Describe the civilizations of the Eastern Hemisphere prior to European contact, such as Muslim civilization, China, Japan, and sub-Sahara Africa.
- 6-9.GEH.1.8.4 Recognize historical perspective by identifying the context in which events occurred.
- 6-9.GEH.1.8.5 Describe the historical origins, central beliefs, and spread of major religions, including Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism.
- 6-9.GEH.1.8.6 Examine multiple points of view by analyzing a current event relating to Africa or Asia.
- 6-9.GEH.5.1.1 Discuss how social institutions, including the family, religion, and education, influence behavior in different societies in the Eastern Hemisphere.
- 6-9.GEH.5.1.2 Give examples of how language, literature, and the arts shaped the development and transmission of culture in the Eastern Hemisphere.
- 6-9.GEH.5.1.3 Define ethnocentrism and give examples of how this attitude can lead to cultural misunderstandings.
- 6-9.GEH.5.1.4 Discuss present conflicts between cultural groups and nation-states in the Eastern Hemisphere.
- 6-9.GEH.5.1.5 Give examples of the benefits of global connections, such as developing opportunities for trade, cooperating in seeking solutions to mutual problems, learning for technological advances, acquiring new perspectives, and benefiting from developments in architecture, music, and the arts.
- 6-9.GEH.5.1.6 Give examples of the causes and consequences of current global issues, such as the expansion of global markets, the urbanization of the developing world, the consumption of natural resources, and the extinction of species, and speculate possible responses by various individuals, groups, and nations.

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**VIII. Follow-up Activities:**

- A. Introduce the concepts of capitalism and communism. Have students generate a list comparing the two. Then have students create a list of Confucian teachings. Have them determine where most Confucian teachings fall within a continuum. In which system would Confucian teachings be most readily accepted and practiced? What would have to change?
- B. Watch the film, Confucius: Words of Wisdom. (This A&E biography reviews the life of the ancient sage K'ung Ch'iu whose message of five virtues changed China, and still exerts a powerful influence on Chinese life today. Confucius scholars Tu Weiming, Morris Rossabi and Julia Ching are interviewed, as well as Confucius' direct descendant, Xiang Lin Kong. Narrated by Hal Linden.) Preview for age appropriateness. Have students write 20 facts from the film. Discuss the film in relation to their previous ideas about Chinese society and their own written sayings.
- C. Use the text, Global Citizenship: Valuing World Heritage, by Susan Watson. ISBN 1-58340-401-5 to introduce students to the idea of becoming a global citizen and the importance of understanding what it means to value world heritage. This is a short text that can be read together in class (A classroom set works the best). There is a short glossary of terms that students should know, and questions throughout the text that give real life examples of what students can do regarding the various issues discussed. Many extension activities could be created based on the information presented in the text.

## **Confucius Sayings**

- 1) “Forget injuries: never forget kindness.”
- 2) “I hear and I forget. I see and I believe. I do and I understand.”
- 3) “Ignorance is the night of the mind, but a night without moon or star.”
- 4) “In a country well governed, poverty is something to be ashamed of. In a country badly governed, wealth is something to be ashamed of.”
- 5) “It is man that makes truth great, not truth that makes man great.”
- 6) “Learning without thought is labor lost.”
- 7) “The essence of knowledge is, having it, to apply it; not having it, to confess your ignorance.”
- 8) “To see what is right, and not do it, is want of courage, or of principle.”
- 9) “Have no friends not equal to yourself.”
- 10) “Things that are done, it is needless to speak about... things that are past, it is needless to blame.”
- 11) “Virtue is not left to stand alone. He who practices it will have neighbors.”
- 12) “If you want to get somewhere, you must let yourself go.”
- 13) “Hold faithfulness and sincerity as first principles.”
- 14) “When you have faults, do not fear to abandon them.”
- 15) “To go beyond is as wrong as to fall short.”
- 16) “The superior man is modest in his speech, but exceeds in his actions.
- 17) “What the superior man seeks is in himself. What the mean man seeks is in others.”
- 18) “What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others.”

## **Teacher Handout 1**

- 19) “The scholar who cherishes the love of comfort is not fit to be deemed a scholar.”
- 20) “Only the wisest and the stupidest of men never change.”

## Teacher Handout 2

### American Quotes

- 1) “We are born believing. A man bears beliefs as a tree bears apples.” Ralph W Emerson
- 2) “If I cannot brag of knowing something, then I brag of not knowing it; at any rate, brag.” RWE
- 3) “Belief consists in accepting the affirmations of the soul; unbelief, in denying them.” RWE
- 4) “I can reason down or deny everything, except this perpetual Belly; feed he must and will, and I cannot make him respectable.” RWE
- 5) “Great geniuses have the shortest biographies.” RWE
- 6) “Education is not preparation for life; education is life itself.” John Dewey
- 7) “A democracy is more than a form of government; it is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience.” JD
- 8) “The method of democracy is to bring conflicts out into the open where their special claims can be seen and appraised, where they can be discussed and judged.” JD
- 9) “Love is a great beautifier.” Louisa May Alcott
- 10) “Housekeeping ain’t no joke.” LMA
- 11) “Energy is more attractive than beauty in a man.” LMA
- 12) “Conceit spoils the finest genius. There is not much danger that real talent or goodness will be overlooked long, and the great charm of all power is modesty.” LMA
- 13) “A government of laws, and not of men.” John Adams

## **Teacher Handout 2**

- 14) “I must study politics and war that my sons may have liberty to study mathematics and philosophy.” JA
- 15) “Fear is the foundation of most governments.” JA
- 16) “The true Republic: men, their rights and nothing more; women, their rights and nothing less.” Susan B. Anthony